

February 20, 2017

Appropriations Committee
Senator Catherine Osten
Senator Paul Formica
Representative Toni Walker
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT

Dear Senator Catherine Osten, Senator Paul Formica, and Representative Toni Walker,

I'm writing to respectfully request your support in ensuring that Magnet Schools in CT receive the funding that they need to continue with the amazing education programs that are offered. I wish I was able to present this information in person, but as a working mother, who is also attending school, I was unable to arrange my schedule to attend the meeting this afternoon.

My husband and I are lucky enough to be parents of a 5th grader and 2nd grader attending Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School in Hamden. So far our experience at this school has been amazing, and it is truly a second home for our children.

WIMS theme is "Making the World a better place" – and they truly do! This school embraces cultural diversity and ensures that all students learn about and show respect for all different nationalities and cultures. Every lesson is weaved in with a demonstration of the application in the real world, as well the interconnectedness of how little actions have bigger effects in the community.

Another area that WIMS leads the way is in technology. Every child receives either an iPad or a Chromebook to help build their technological aptitude. This type of exposure will greatly help the students as they continue their education.

There are several extra and advanced programs that are offered to WIMS students. Spanish instruction starts in kindergarten and the extended day allows all students to have 2 "specials" a day. Both of my children have been taking violin lessons for the past 2-3 years. My daughter has participated in an Enrichment program, which developed her marketing and presentation skills as part of a team who presented to the manager of a Themed restaurant and the owner of a successful bakery. An agreement with SCSU allows several foreign languages to be offered as afterschool programs. Also, several teachers stay after the regular school day to allow students to participate in the drama program.

Additionally, services are offered to help children build the skills in areas where they are lacking. My son, with ADHD, has been learning mindfulness and receives group social skill lessons, which have allowed him to be more grounded at both school and home. Both my children have received speech services. My daughter

has received extra instruction in reading to keep her at grade level, and develop her love for reading, so now I find her sneaking under the covers at night to read “just one more chapter”! These pull-out programs are also done in a way that children who need extra help do not feel like they’re being singled out.

The other night, our family attended Primary Academy Math night – where my 2nd grader was able to expand his math skills with fun games that also allowed him to interact with different teachers and students from K-2nd grade. We’ve also attended several evening Art shows, Dances and Concerts that pull together the whole WIMS community. Also, the entire town of Hamden participates in the annual International Fair, which is an amazing event celebrating the diversity and culture of WIMS families (this year it is on Saturday, May 6th if you would like to see for yourself what makes WIMS such a special place!)

Every day my children go to school excited to learn – which is a change from the school and programs they attended before joining WIMS. They are supported by the entire faculty and staff, and truly feel they are an integral part of the WIMS community. They have been offered many opportunities that are not included in our neighborhood schools. We would hate for them to miss out on this amazing experience, due to a lack of funding.

We, and our children, are counting on your support to help allow Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School, and the other magnet schools in CT, to continue the fine job they are doing in creating students who are leaders, and truly committed to making the world a better place.

Thank you for your consideration and support!

Best Regards,

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